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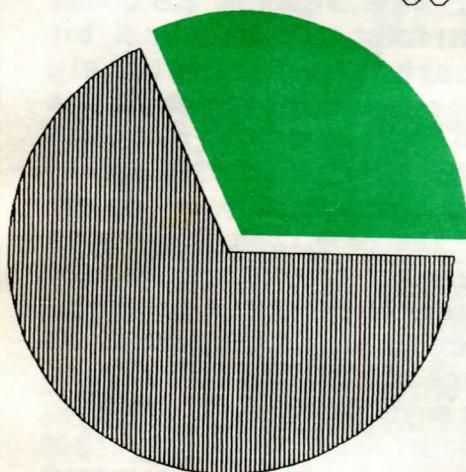
An ABE's ACE's Publication

February 1988

US SHARE OF ATARI PRODUCTION SHARPLY REDUCED

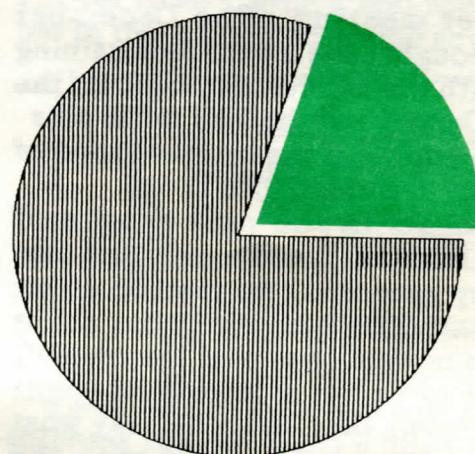
1986

US SHARE
32%



1987

US SHARE
20%



The January 1988 issue of ST Informer reports that last year, 80% of Atari's production went to the European market, leaving only 20% for sale in the United States. This would account for the problems many of us have had in finding Atari equipment in stock.

Atari Corporation has decided to "build or acquire plant facilities in the United States" in 1988. This would go a long way towards easing the shortage.

ST Informer is a great source of news. It is the "InfoWorld" for ST owners. A one year subscription is only \$15 and includes one free PD software disk. If you're interested, send your check to ST Informer, 909 NW Starlite Place, Grants Pass, OR 97526.

ST Editorial

by Joe Souder

"Promises, promises..."

Well, as you may know now, Tony Smolar is the 8-bit editor, and I am the ST Editor. Ralph Fenner is our coordinator and has taken the spot on the E-board. This issue is basically made up of the contest entries which I am happy to say we have a lot of. We have plenty of 8 bit reviews, ST reviews, and reviews for both. We also have a lot of articles of club topics. This issue is packed with many interesting articles and we hope you like it!

December meeting. The December meeting (I thought) was a very entertaining meeting. With the interesting topic on the software of Gemini and the BIG raffle plus the food and drink and the relaxed mood of it all made the meeting GREAT!

Atari. Atari in the past couple of months has FINALLY come out with two products they promised two years to a year ago. The Atari SX212 is finally out and it is a very nice modem (just read the review). The modem came out as promised (right before Christmas), they just didn't say what year! Atari has also come out with the MEGAS. They are STs plus some and they are very nice. The Mega 2 has 2 megabytes of RAM (tough to guess, eh?) and the Mega 4 has four megabytes of RAM (of course). They are priced at \$1,699 and \$2,399 respectively. These are monochrome, for color system add \$200. The Megas came out at the end of September. However, Atari has yet to come out with the laser printer.

Keep those
newsletter submissions coming!

8 Bit Editorial

by Tony Smolar

"Where's the Software?"

Welcome to the "new" Hardcopy! This issue, as you probably know, Joe Souder is taking over as ST editor, and I'm the new 8-bit editor. We have many new ideas that we would like to use in the newsletter over the next few months. But for this month we will be primarily using contest material.

Now for the main topic of this editorial. Recently Atari released the XE Game system in an attempt to boost the 8-bit market. Although it isn't going to help shake the "game machine" image, it is a good idea since right now game machines are enjoying renewed popularity. It should also bring more software support to the 8-bits because the new 128k-256k carts that will be available for it will be very difficult to pirate because the programs won't be written to access the disk drive for data, so much of the code will have to be rewritten by anybody trying to copy it to a disk. Also, most disks won't hold that much data. All this should mean increased sales for the programs. The only problem is that the price of these games will cost more because of the media it's on.

But that brings me up to what this column is about. "Where can you find software for this machine?" I was up at the Whitehall and Lehigh Valley Malls the other week and saw several stores that were selling XEgs's, but most of them weren't selling much software for it or any Atari 8-bits. Clover, for example, had the XEgs but the only software title they sold for it (that I saw) was Star Raiders 2. Toys R Us had them also but only a few titles. Especially compared to all the games they had for the Nintendo's, Sega's, Atari 7800 and 2600's, plus they had a whole row of

Commodore 64 software. The only place with a decent selection of 8-bit software was Electronics Boutique. But they've already stopped selling all Atari Hardware, and I heard a salesperson saying that the software may go next.

How is the XEgs going to succeed as a game machine if there aren't any games to be found for it? They won't sell themselves by sitting on the shelf. A person planning to buy a game machine will probably base his/her choice on the machine with the best quality selection. And since Atari software is hard to find but Nintendo or Sega isn't, those machines may look like a better choice.

Test Drive

A 16 bit review

by Dennis Galligan

It has finally arrived and we were sure to buy our copy pronto. The game is TEST DRIVE by Accolade. Gemini has it for \$29.00, well worth the price and wait. You'll be driving one of the world's 5 most exotic cars, which include a Ferrari Testarossa, a Lotus Turbo, a Porsche 911 Turbo, a Lamborghini Coutach, or dust the fuzz in a Corvette.

During play you are seated in your car. You can see the dash board and controls, which are different for each car, or look out the rear view mirror to spot the police. The graphics and animation are very authentic. After playing one night I went to work the next day and found myself trying to increase my skill on turns near cemetary curve in Easton. I had to stop because I realized I wasn't driving the kind of car used in TEST DRIVE and didn't have the ability to outrace a cop car like you can in TEST DRIVE. Your car is equipped with radar detection and either a four or five speed shifter, which you can set to shift like a real car where you do all the shifting,

or shift by just moving the joy stick up and pressing the fire button to go thru the gears. Careful, if you rev up the RPM's too high you'll blow your engine and the game will be over.

Your goal in TEST DRIVE is to reach the "Top of the Rock", a long mountainess road, ideal to put your car through the paces. If you travel too slowly along the way you'll be told that the dealer that sold you the car wants it back and the game will end.

You are able to save high scores to your disk. A great game that utilizes the power of the ST in both graphics/sound and depth departments. It was a pretty nervous time looking up into the rear view mirror and seeing the cop car with his lights flashing. I never have gotten a real speeding ticket but in this game I've gotten several.

Age of Adventure

An 8 bit review

by Charles Yost Jr.

Age of Adventure is one of the newer releases for the Atari 8-bit by Electronic Arts. Age of Adventure is actually two games in one but neither game is anything new to veteran adventure gamers. It consists of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves and The Return of Heracles, one on each side of the disk. The twenty-four page manual included describes both games more than adequately. The first eleven pages describe Ali Baba and the last thirteen describe Return of Heracles right down to a glossary of Greek Mythology which makes Return of Heracles a bit educational too.

ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES

When you start out in Ali Baba you are at his home. When entering any room a

box appears around important things in that room before any of your options can be chosen. Your options are as follows:

MOVING-is automatically selected by moving the joystick in any direction or after attacking use the joystick to highlight the MOVE option.

RESTING-Resting after a battle will return most of your strength lost. Resting is highly recommended after any battle and only when there are no enemies in the room.

DEFENDING- You should defend yourself when an enemy is in range to attack you. Chances are you won't get hit.

ATTACKING- You have to get within range of the enemy to attack. If your weapon is cheap and breaks then your attack was probably useless.

SEEING YOUR LOT-Choose the See Your Lot option to check your lifeforce, wealth, armor, strength, speed, dexterity, and weapon capability.

Other options are these:

DROPPING GOLD AND/OR ARMOR-This option will increase your character's dexterity. Dropped gold can be recovered, but dropped armor cannot be recovered.

RETIRE- This option removes a character from the game but does not save or end the game.

STILL MORE OPTIONS!!!!!!

CHANGE DIFFICULTY-This option changes how dangerous and how fast the game is.

SAVE GAME-need I say more??

The overall goal to the game is to rescue the kidnapped Princess Buddir. I mention this towards the end because it is the least of your troubles. Surviving is the most important thing to do. There are monsters, animals, and other humans too numerous and different to list. Let's just say its tough!!

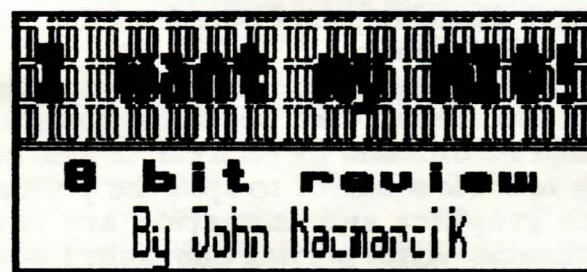
THE RETURN OF HERACLES

The second part of Age of Adventure is The Return of Heracles. Almost all the options in this game are the same as in Ali Baba. The only notable difference is the "Know Thyself" option which is just the see your lot option in Ali Baba. It is used the same, to check your strength, etc. The goal for this game is different. You have to reach the Oracle of Zeus to receive your task. After you complete the task you return to the Oracle of Zeus and he will reward you and give you another task. It is slightly hard to complete all twelve tasks, but there is some help. The Oracle at Delphi provides clues. The more you give the clearer the clues are.

One thing I personally didn't like and won't use again is the option that lets you use the keyboard to control the games. I find it takes away from the fun because its harder to learn and use than the joystick.

All in all AGE OF ADVENTURE is definitely a good bargain at \$14.95 and will give you many hours of challenging adventurous gaming.

Age of Adventure
Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171



I want my MIO! You better believe it!

For those of you who don't know, the ICD Multi I/O board (MIO) is a complex peripheral device which adds exceptional power to the ATARI 800XL and 130XE computer. It plugs into the parallel bus of the 800XL or the 130XE (with adaptor) and gives the user five additional hardware functions not available with a stock 8-bit

Atari computer. These are: a PARALLEL PRINTER INTERFACE, a SERIAL INTERFACE for a PRINTER or a MODEM, a PRINTER BUFFER, a BOOTABLE RAMDISK, and an SCSI/SASI interface for HARD DISK DRIVES or TAPE BACKUP UNITS!

130 XE owners will need ICD's special adaptor board to use the MIO and replace the cartridge slot. This board plugs directly into the cartridge and ECI connectors and converts all signals to be compatible with the 800XL bus while adding two additional cartridge slots! (These slots are connected in parallel so do NOT try to plug in two standard cartridges at the same time.)

The MIO has built in software to control it all! There are two versions of the MIO - 256K and 1 Meg. and because the MIO has its own power supply you don't lose your ramdisk contents when the computer is turned off!

Booting from the ramdisk brings awesome speed to the 8 bit Ataris! I am booted up and dialing out using Express 850 (stored in the MIO in a subdirectory) in about 5 seconds! This is not a misprint! 5 seconds! Then I decide to quit Express and do some word processing. No problem! A few touches of the keys and in about 5 seconds one of my word processing programs is booted and ready to go! You people out there who are still using a stock Atari with a stock Atari 1050 disk drive don't realize the potential of your 800XL or 130XE! Check it out and I am sure you will be impressed!

ICD has supported the 8 bit Ataris superbly! There are quite a few programs for the MIO that were written by local users. Most of these are public domain and can be found on the local BBS's.

Oh yeah! You are probably wondering, "How much is this alien contraption?!" Well the 256K MIO can be bought for under \$200.00 and the 1 meg is hovering around \$300.00 and worth every penny of it! Have I thought about getting into an ST since I got the ICD stuff? Negative! I am

quite happy with my system the way it is! The only thing I would want is 80 columns! I hear the Atari 80 column adapter is out! I would love to check it out if someone around here had it! I wouldn't mind a 3.5" disk drive either! There is a company that makes a "SUPER TURBO INTERFACE" which allows an Atari 8 bit user to use an IBM or compatible 3.5" disk drive! I will definitely check that out! So as far as I can see with the support of ICD and other companies, I will stick with my 8-bit stuff! I WANT MY MIO!!!

MIO

(C)1986 ICD Inc.
1220 Rock Street,
Rockford, IL
61101-1437
(815) 968-2228

J & S COMPUTERS	
(215) 966-4464	
<hr/>	
ATARI	
1040/ST COLOR-----	\$859
1040/ST MONO-----	715
130XE COMPUTER-----	149
1050 DISK DRIVE-----	135
1027 PRINTER-----	125
<hr/>	
PRINTERS	
INTERFACE-----	35
EPSON LX86-----	269
EPSON FX86e-----	429
EPSON FX286e-----	619
EPSON LQ800-----	549
EPSON LQ1000-----	799
EPSON EX800-----	529
EPSON EX1000-----	759
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MISC.	
DATALIFE 5 1/4" DISKS-----	10
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A 16 bit review

A Vote for GFA Basic

by Charles Baily



ST Basic
Pascal
Forth

One of my main reasons for buying an ATARI ST computer was it's capability to produce superior graphics at a reasonable price. After using Neochrome, D.E.G.A.S., D.E.G.A.S Elite, and ANTIC 3D (as well as several other P.D. programs), I came to realize that I couldn't effectively utilize them in an ST BASIC program.

The obvious thing was to learn a new language and C was the most tested, but after reading some ST magazines I couldn't justify learning a complete new language.

Along comes GFA BASIC and I was a little apprehensive, after all when they advertise things like "no line numbers" and "structured programming", it doesn't sound much like BASIC to me.

I wasn't doing much about graphics anyway, so I took the plunge. After a while I was glad I took up using GFA BASIC.

Two applications come to mind, one is Tom Hudson's ray tracing in the spring of 1987 START magazine. You design the four walls on D.E.G.A.S and locate the ball(s). The program then produces a picture that shows the balls with the reflections of the walls in the ball(s).

You make ten such pictures with the balls changing position and with GFA BASIC you can capture the screen of each picture. Then I wrote a simple program to animate them. In fact you can take it one step further and even animate the walls and it will show in the reflections on the balls. When finished you have a customized BUBBLES type demo.

I do this with a 520ST and single sided disk drive. The ten frame demo requires a compiled program. A nine frame demo can be done with GFA BASIC Run Only

module and an eight frame demo can be done within the BASIC program itself. These limitations are memory related, so if you have 1040ST or a memory upgrade forget them.

The other application I used was in programming a HEARTS card game. Here I used D.E.G.A.S Elite to design a deck of cards and the title for the beginning of the game. With GFA BASIC you can capture and save only a portion of the screen. In the beginning of the program it loads the two screens (which are darkened), then the picture of 52 cards are captured and used throughout the game.

These are not the only two reasons GFA BASIC gets my vote, but they do rank high. Just think of the possibilities where you design your background and screens then call them up when you need them, and it's all done in basic.

There are many reviews written about GFA BASIC, a couple with things on the down side, but if you are still in ST BASIC they will seem trivial. This was not written to dissuade anyone from their chosen programming language, but if you are not satisfied with the BASIC you are using and don't want to learn another completely new language. Then you may want to give GFA BASIC a good look.

What ABE's ACEs means to me

By Lawrence R. Tischbein

Since joining the club in May 1987, here are my impressions of what I have seen and heard so far.

The "disks" for the 8 bit and the STs can not be matched for the price and the quality.

All members are very knowledgeable and very skilled at operating computers; hopefully these skills and knowledge in time will rub off on a "klotz" like me.

The meetings have been very interesting and entertaining and since the officers are family men, it is understandable that the September meeting had to be cancelled.

There is very little to tell about me. I am 66 years and retired. I have access to the use of an Atari 800XL with a disk drive and an Atari printer, also game disks, cartridges, and other programs including "Letter Wizard," a word processing disk.

I thought by joining the club I could get the needed help to learn to use the computer at my disposal; but I now realize that everyone is so skilled and advanced and short on time to teach a beginner. I would use the knowledge if I had it to try and help the club provided I am smart enough to be taught to use the equipment that is at my disposal.

Are there any other members in the same shoes as mine?

If so, what can be done to help these members? I just can't believe that I am the only member who needs to be educated, people won't advance to STs and phone modems if they can't run the 8 bits, etc.

Probably the purpose of the club isn't to take raw beginners and train them to run computers. In this case I apologize to all concerned and sincerely hope that I have not offended anyone as that is not my intention or purpose. Maybe a new member should fill out an application when he or she joins the club that would show the skill level the new member is at and a committee could advise the new member as to his or her best course of action to take to learn to run his or her equipment that is at their disposal.

On the other hand, if this article brings forward more members who need help, then any criticism that I deserve for speaking my piece will gladly be accepted.

Please remember the old saying:
"Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

Atari SX212 Modem

by Joe Souder

SX212	HS	NR	CD	DM	RD	SD	TR	MR
ATARI	■	□	□	□	□	□	■	■

An Atari 1200 baud modem?!?! About 2 and a half to three years ago, Atari claimed they would come out with a 1200 baud modem. Well, people waited and waited (including me) for this modem to come out, holding out on buying another modem. Well, it has finally come out and here is a review of it.

Compatibility. The Atari SX212 is compatible with many computer systems. The systems it is compatible with are all Atari computers, IBM computers, IBM-compatible computers, and RS232-equipped computers or terminals. Included in the package is the modem itself, a power adaptor, Owner's Manual, and a warranty card. As you can figure out, you must buy the cables for your specific computer. For example, with the ST, you must buy an RS232 cable with a female end and a male end. For the 8 bit, you must buy a SIO cable with plugs right into the back of the modem.

Features. The Atari SX212 is Hayes compatible, has a built in speaker with volume control, and auto-dial and auto-answer capabilities. It is 75-300, and 1200 baud.

Software. On my Atari 520ST, I use Flash and occasionally the Desktop VT-52 emulator. Most other software should work that works with the Avatex modems. On the 8 bit it is a little different (from what I hear). From what I have heard from a sysop in the area, all programs that work for the Avatex modems should work on the SX212 with one exception: a handler designed for the SX212 must be loaded before the program you are running because the SX212 does not need an interface to run on the 8 bit (because of the

SIO port in the back). However, you could eliminate the whole problem by buying an interface and using the RS232 port instead of using the SIO port. However, this would run you more money unless you have an interface already.

Above the competition? The SX212 is about the same (in my opinion) as an Avatex 1200hc with three known (to me) exceptions: 1. The Atari SX212 has no switches on it, for it is completely software controlled. 2. It has an SIO port so that no interface is needed for the 8 bit computers. 3. The Atari SX212 is considerably cheaper. I got it for \$89 (plus a cable to hook it to my ST for \$14) mail order from Micro Tyme in Ohio. It got to my house in 3 business days. Whereas, the lowest I have seen an Avatex 1200hc is about \$110 giving you (with an SX212), in essence, a free cable plus some for the price of just an Avatex 1200hc. Is an SX212 for you? Well, if you were going to buy an Avatex modem (or a modem similar to it) and 1200 baud is fast enough for your needs, the SX212 is for you (at a cheaper price). Atari has once again kept their promise of "Power without the Price."

Next Issue

Reviews on:

Xe Game System
Infiltrator

Plus an article
about the FCC
and MUCH MORE!



If you are an Atari 8-bit user, the next time someone asks you "What can you do with your home computer?", pull out the Atari Planetarium program and show them. It would be hard, if not impossible, to duplicate everything this interactive educational program can do without a computer system.

Just what can you do with this program? Well, with it you can identify objects that you see in the night sky from any location on the Earth and even get a brief summary of facts about the objects that you select. This is done quite easily by picking out a reference point in the sky that anyone can recognize, such as the Moon, and then matching up what you actually see in the sky with what you see on your monitor or TV screen. The program stores information on the planets of our solar system, over 1200 stars, 88 constellations, 300 deep space objects, and even Halley's comet.

If you have a telescope, you can use this process in reverse to find the proper settings to locate a particular object in the sky from your location and time.

Did I say time? The Planetarium also functions as a sort of "time machine", letting you travel backwards and forwards in time about 10,000 years to observe important historical events in the sky, such as eclipses that were recorded by early astronomers thousands of years ago. Appropriate for this time of year, you can even visit Bethlehem at the time of the birth of Christ to see what may have been the "Christmas Star" that the three wise men followed. Also, in case you missed it last year, you can track Halley's comet across the sky during its recent pass close to the Earth.

You can also change your location to anywhere on Earth to see how the sky looks from there. You can go to Brazil by putting in the proper coordinates (they are provided in the manual) and see the Southern Cross, which cannot be observed from the Northern Hemisphere. Take an armchair trip to the North Pole to see the Midnight Sun.

The program also gives you the ability to speed up time so that you can observe events that normally take several hours, such as a total solar eclipse, in just a few minutes.

You can represent the sky as it actually looks, or you can superimpose all those drawings of animals and people that the ancients used to identify the constellations over the stars. If that isn't enough help, you can put the names of the objects on the screen too!

The manual that comes with the Planetarium is excellent. It not only gives you everything you need to run the program in an easy to find and organized way, but also is a short course in astronomy with lots of high quality drawings and maps to illustrate different concepts in the field. My daughter is taking an Earth and Space Science course this year in school, and she has found both the program and the manual to be a great help to her in the course.

Any gripes? Well, the program lets you dump anything on the screen to an Atari XMM801 or Epson compatible printer. The picture comes out with a black background and white objects and text. Very realistic, but this is a slow process and it tends to eat up printer ribbons quickly.

In summary, whether you are already a backyard astronomer or would just like to learn more about space and what the things are that you see in the sky at night, the Atari Planetarium program is definitely worth getting.

Planetarium
Atari Corp.
1196 Borregas Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94088
(408) 745-2367

FRUSTRATION

By Harvey Schram

What does one do, or attempt to do to answer the legitimate needs and requests of our E board. I know our reluctance in many cases is due to timidity since I believe many would like to assure the health of this faltering organization.

Yes I'm busy too! But more than being busy with my much overtime requiring job (no O.T. paid), promising "wifey Dear" to finish the addition (as big as the original house), take care of my orchards, animals, gardens, greenhouse, etc., I feel inadequate due to my lack of technical knowledge in the areas that the organization seems to need the most help. I live at the edge of the area, no member or enthusiast lives within 10 miles of me.

But that's not the worst of it. I'm not even sure this Epistle is going to get placed in the correct tracks or sectors of this disk. Why, because my equipment is not weary from age but seems to have quality control problems (800XL is 8 months old, much of the time half the keyboard did not work, 1050 disk drive, 6 month old, either doesn't read all the info on a disk, many error messages, boot error on disks that always worked before, erases info on my program disks, etc.) therefore I'm not sure I'll be able to record this through my Atari Speedscript 3.0 program.

And to add to the confusion I don't have a modem and don't know how to use most of the utilities. I sure do miss the 8 bit SIGs.

Anyway, regardless of the above palaver, I'm willing to try to be of some, even if minimal, assistance.

Name : Joe
Address :
Date :
Phone #:

Why a Club?

by J. D. Craig

Joe
Fifteen and 00
Qtr

-J.D. Craig, Member - ABE's ACEs, Past President - Lehigh Valley Computer Group

Joe is doing his monthly paperwork, and comes across a bill for his ABE's ACEs membership. He's just paid for a new roof, braces for Junior, and the cat's hysterectomy. Should he really send these guys any more money? He hasn't been to a meeting in over a year, and doesn't know what else he could possibly get out of membership, now that he knows what he wants to do with his computer, and has learned how to do it. Why should he retain his membership?

Well, let's be honest about clubs. Like the people who form them, they are mortal. ABE's ACEs has been active for a number of years. What keeps the club vital?

1) New technology. The advances that brought us home computers in the first place continue to create newer, more efficient, and cheaper hard and software systems. Computer groups usually are well informed on what's hot, and what's not.

2) Service and support. Very few of us have been entirely happy with retailers and service centers when we have trouble with our equipment. A group of users like ABE's ACEs has collective experience with different systems, and can warn the troubled user about certain uncaring or unscrupulous businesses. And as new machines and software packages are introduced, members buy them, try them out, and can then relate their experiences to other members. Are there bugs in the system? Has someone come up with effective shortcuts in running the system? Users will know, and club members will often tell. Also, hobbyist members can often offer actual do-it-ourselves service or advice, often cutting maintenance costs

considerably.

3) General communication. At the meetings, you can learn about new developments and corner some users for face to face interaction. Can't make the meetings? Most newsletters (including ours) welcome your questions and comments, and many members contribute regular reports on specific happenings. And for modem users, the Club Bulletin Board is (usually) up for on-line communication.

4) The people who care enough to keep it going. Behind all these advantages lie the individual human beings who are willing to give up some of their personal time to share. It is a willing association of these people that is the real power of a computer group. A collection of people willing to share their experience and expertise is a brain pool, and the availability of such an association is a valuable resource indeed. Like insurance, one never knows when one will need it.

So Joe should definitely send that check. He should also try to get to some meetings on a more regular basis, and perhaps offer to help. He might even run for office. But the check, which barely covers the Club's expenses, is the first step. Contribute to your brain-pool. Then think of other ways to use and support it. Like children, organizations need care and support to thrive.

Ask not what your club can do for you but what you can do for your club.

STAR TREK

The Rebel Universe

An ST review by Brian Oplinger

Graphics Adventure for the Atari ST

by Simon and Schuster Software

Requires Color Monitor or TV

Retail \$39.95

Star Trek, the Rebel Universe is a new graphic adventure for the ST. It is based upon the television show "Star Trek". The graphics include pictures of all of the cast. Your 5 year mission is to stop a deadly Klingon plot to cause all of the Federation to switch allegiance to the Klingon Empire.

Game play is done graphically with no input from the keyboard. To do an action, one uses the mouse and picks a graphic. This can be a picture of Spock for getting information about the solar system, planets, the status of the Enterprise, or enemy ships. Scotty can be used to check the state of the warp and impulse engines. Uhura receives all messages. The sounds used in the game are mostly digitized sounds. These range from Chekov's enthusiastic "Got 'em" when attacking enemy ships to the familiar sound of Uhura's intercom to the transporter in action. All interaction with the game is smooth and easy.

Although the graphics, digitized sounds, and user interface are all top quality, this is an adventure game. As Captain Kirk, you must move the Enterprise through a universe of Klingon, Romulan, Federation, and Independent star systems. There are over 4000 planets in the game with 3 to 6 planets per star. This means there are about 1000 stars to visit. The manual lists 8 ways to win, 22 strategic (needed to win at least one way) items, 9 tactical (useful to

the Enterprise) items, and does not even bother to describe a host of miscellaneous items. Travel from star to star is based upon warp speed chosen and distance travelled. Add to this the Catastrophe Pods which may explode and destroy the Enterprise, and one may begin to see the magnitude of the game.

This all adds up to a game that is quite captivating. One can spend many nights playing the game without beginning to see all of the available universe. The big flaw I find with this game is the virtual impossibility of mapping the dungeon, a prerequisite of successful adventure play. This flaw, coupled with the many ways to win makes a game which can be played for what seems to be forever without ever getting closer to the final objective.

Summing up, I like the interface, graphics, and digitized sounds but do not believe the game may be played to successful completion.

Things I would Like to See in Our Club by Glenn H. Snyder and Family

One, is a lot more input from the members in the form of a survey of what the members want to do, have and so forth. Example: If you want to have other interests listed in the membership list then go by what the vote is. I would also like to see those listed that would be willing to give one on one help in a particular area.

Someone that is good in data management, ST Writer etc. The following is what my family would like to see. And hope it totals 500 or more. Family membership in ABE's ACE's- Ha!Ha!Ha! Why would anyone bother? For the single member price of fifteen (15) dollars, a family would receive the same benefits as its current twenty (20) dollar buys. All club mailings are listed in only one person's name and do not even include the courtesy words "and family". This exclusion leads to resentment and discourages everyone in the family from participation in club activities. And let's face it, if I (wife) get annoyed enough, there is no way that he (husband) is going to be much more than nominally involved in club activities! With six (6) members in our family, why should one be the only voice heard? At every election, he is the only one who's opinion counts. Even the U.S. government has been unable to deny me the privilege of speaking my own mind. Besides as anyone who knows the both of us can easily tell you we never agree on anything! Where is the family in "family membership"? How often have any of us, other than my husband, been to a meeting? The kids certainly don't feel welcome there and there is never, or at least seldom, anything to keep their attention. What the club needs is programs for elementary and other kids. Now is the time to look to the future! Get the kids hooked now and the club has places to go and people to take it there. So what is a family membership? Under current conditions it's one colossal waste. There are no added benefits and one person (usually the husband) is the only person allowed to vote, the kids are ignored and the wife alienated. He might as well put it the way it is and just offer single membership or else become committed to the "family" of family memberships. And now for the younger members of the family. With this club it seems that kids have no freedom because the meeting is so full of technicalities and this causes a lot of children to shy away from the club. I

personally wish they would have special meetings just for kids. It would advance our knowledge of computers and help us to meet new friends. I think computers are very interesting but the clubs make it seem like it will be much more educational as you get older. Who says kids can not enjoy computers as much as adults do! I would like to see more contests with prizes like computers because we are always arguing about who uses the computer. If I had my own computer we could eliminate some of the fighting and I could do my homework on MY computer instead of my dad's. Another thing I would like to see is new programs purchased by the computer club. They should choose someone to learn the programs and then demonstrate it at the club meetings. My father would gladly volunteer to demonstrate some of the programs. After the demonstration they should raffle the program off to others who are interested in having a copy.

SUPERBIKE CHALLENGE

A 16 bit review by
Dennis Galligani

ATARI
MEGA ST
Morgans

Superbike Challenge by Broderbund is not to be confused with SuperCycle by Epyx. The Broderbund game is brand new and is a far superior game.

In SuperBike Challenge you race against another player or the computer via a split screen, just as in Pit Stop II, the 8 bit game. Racing are 4 MICROIDS racers in addition to you and your opponent. The graphics are excellent and play is very realistic. My two boys and I have been playing this game for a couple of weeks now and we still find it challenging and fun. We became bored with Supercycle in about 20 minutes or as long as it took me to fill out the warranty

card.

Included in the package is a sweepstakes form to win a 650cc Suzuki Motorcycle plus other prizes, a nice little bonus. The \$16.00 I paid for the program is in the price range I'd like to be paying for other games as well. I bought Superbike Challenge in Pittsburgh at Morgan's Computers, and yes he has the Mega ST in stock and he has ordered the Laser printers. He says that they are not only in the warehouse but are being hand loaded on trucks and being placed in trucks to be delivered. Well, maybe.

**Dip-Flip
Eliminator**
by Doug Long
An 8 bit utility

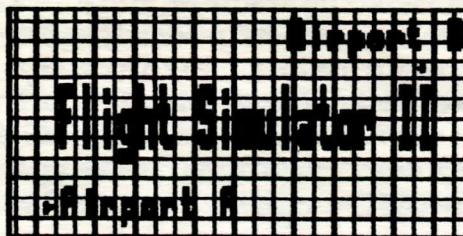


Which of your printer's DIP switches is going to wear out first? For me it's a sure bet--the one that chooses between auto LF with CR and no LF from the printer. This feature many times is not software-selectable, and the DIP switch on the printer or interface typically must be switched one way for graphics programs and the other to list programs and print documentations. Only after creating one really black line or a whole page of every-other-line printing do I remember to flip it the other way. To make matters worse, text files come in two varieties: those that send a CR LF (ctrl-M, ctrl-J, decimal 13 10) sequence and those that use (8-bit) Atari's EOL (inverse escape, decimal 155) character.

For those of you who can't (or would rather not) use a word processor to globally

replace these characters, here is a little utility that converts a text file from one type to the other--either way--and preserves the original file. It's written in **Atari BASIC** and should be self-explanatory. To maximize speed use TurboBASIC's compiler to compile the program, the runtime utility to run the compiled version, and a ramdisk as the source and destination drive. And don't forget to include the drive number when prompted for filespecs. If you use your modem to capture text files, use this program to convert those files with funny-looking bars and triangles to a form that can be printed without flipping your DIP.

Note: Items in brackets are keystrokes.
0 DIM F1\$(15),F2\$(15),A\$(257):POKE 702,64
1 ? CHR\$(125):? " DIPFLIP! File Utility"
2 ? :? " From Filespec>":INPUT F1\$
3 ? " To Filespec>":INPUT F2\$
4 IF F1\$=F2\$ THEN ? CHR\$(253):? " You don't want to do that!":GOTO 17
5 ? :? " A)dd or D)elete linefeeds? ";
6 OPEN #1,4,0,"K:"
7 GET #1,A:IF A<>65 AND A<>68 THEN ? CHR\$(253):GOTO 7
8 ? CHR\$(A):? :? " Press RETURN when ready. ";
9 GET #1,B:IF B<>155 THEN ? CHR\$(253):GOTO 9
10 ? "[({25)ESC DELETE}] Working";
11 CLOSE #1:OPEN #1,4,0,F1\$:OPEN #2,8,0,F2\$
12 TRAP 16:IF A=68 THEN 14
13 INPUT #1,A\$:A\$(LEN(A\$)+1)=[(CTRL M){CTRL J}]:? #2,A\$:? ".":GOTO 13
14 GET #1,A:IF A=13 THEN GET #1,A:? #2:? ".":GOTO 14
15 PUT #2,A:GOTO 14
16 CLOSE #1:CLOSE #2
17 ? :? :? " Press RETURN to continue. ";
18 OPEN #1,4,0,"K:"
19 GET #1,B:IF B<>155 THEN ? CHR\$(253):GOTO 19
20 CLOSE #1:GOTO 1



A 16 bit review by Shawn E. Gill

Flight Simulator II is much more than just a simple airplane game. Sure, you can fly upside down and pass under the Oakland Bay Bridge; but, if you take flying seriously, this program can provide hours of realistic flying. The two main areas of Flight Simulator are (1) the actual flying and (2) a very realistic navigational system.

The flying is the easy part, right? Well, you'll get used to it after awhile. The only real drawback is the mouse control - it's very inaccurate; it is hard to climb or dive without banking or to apply brakes without increasing throttle. There is a simple solution though - use the keyboard. The controls are set up on the calculator pad. Flying with the keyboard is much more accurate and is especially helpful when using instrument navigation - but more on this later. The "ailerons" and "rudder center" on the keyboard quickly allows you to straighten the plane out after a fast turn; this is, also, of value when using instruments. Even though you employ the keyboard, you will still have to use the mouse to fine-tune the instruments; but, for the most part, this can be easily accomplished.

There are two ways to navigate when flying: VFR (Visual Flight Rules) or IFR (Instrument Flight Rules). VFR is simply looking out the window and at the map display. This is sufficient when flying to a nearby airport and under favorable conditions; but, these conditions do not include night. On the other hand, IFR is used to fly to airports that are out of the range of the on-screen map. And, if you

prefer to use all the realism options when you fly at night, you will have to turn on your lights to see the instruments. When IFR flying, the first thing you will need is a map of the area. If you don't have one, IFR navigation will be impossible.

Using the method of instrument navigation described in the instructions will get you to the desired airport, but that is about all. Through the use of the VORs (Very high frequency Omnidirectional Range), you can easily line-up your plane with the runway, long before final approach is begun.

The system works as follows:

VOR NAVIGATION (Criss-Cross)

1. Use a ruler and draw a line through your runway at Airport A, in the direction you intend to travel.
2. Draw a line through the runway at Airport B, where you intend to land, so it intersects the first line you drew.
3. Set Nav 1 for the airport you are travelling to (Airport B).
4. Set Nav 2 for the airport you are starting from (Airport A).
5. The DME will display the straight line distance from Airport A to the intended airport (Airport B) in nautical miles.
6. Set the top number of VOR 2 equal to the degrees associated with the radial line extending from the airport you are at (Airport A) and running in the direction you intend to travel.
7. Set the top number of VOR 1 equal to the degrees associated with the radial line extending through the airport where you intend to land (Airport B).
8. Fly with a compass heading of VOR 2 and keep the line centered; if you can't, change course by 10 degrees into the direction of the line. When centered, resume course.
9. When the point of intersection is reached, VOR 1 will briefly center; then, execute a quick turn and fly with a compass heading of VOR 1, repeating the centering

steps described in #8 above.

Note: On long distance flights, the DME and VOR 1 may not register, but just follow Step #8 and they eventually will.

SEE EXAMPLE BELOW

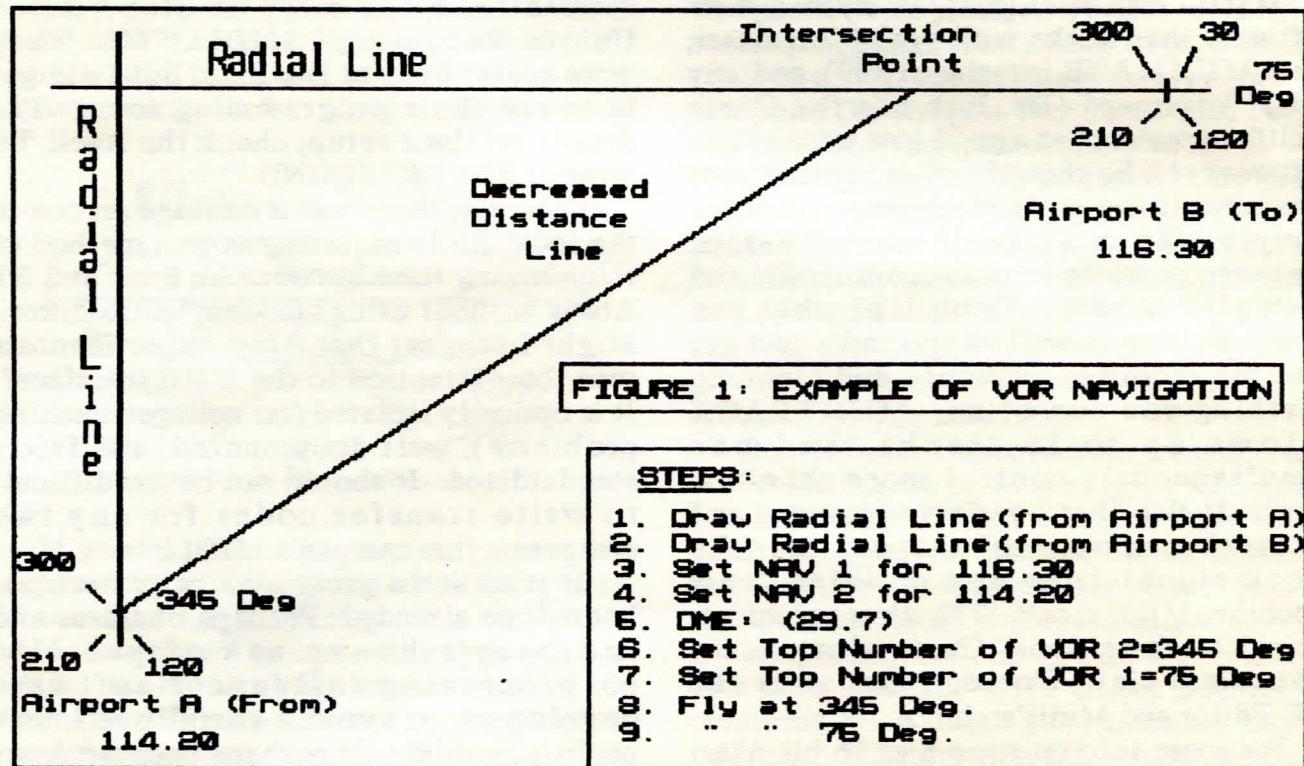
To Decrease Distance:

1. Keep Step #2.
2. Draw a Radial Line from the Center of Airport A so it intersects Radial B about an inch before the Directional Indicator.
3. As soon as you take off, turn approximately 20 Deg. past the Decreased Distance Line. When VOR 2 centers, fly on Correct Heading (19 Deg.).

Other features that help make FSII realistic are the COM radios and the ILS approaches. Another very good aspect of FS II is quick and fluid animation.

Although it is easy to take for granted, I quickly learned to appreciate the animation after seeing FS II on a friend's APPLE. A big help to the animation is the spotter plane, which can provide some truly spectacular views. But to get the full effect of the spot-view, you should pause the game and then switch to the instant replay after completing a maneuver or successful landing.

If you do not have FS II, I recommend that you buy it, so you too can have fun flying a Cessna 182 type aircraft (or Lear Jet); you can also use it as a training tool for actual flying. And, if you find that you enjoy it as much as I do, you may also wish to consider purchasing scenery disks, which are about \$18 each - these will let you fly throughout most of the United States and a few other countries.



Sound Programming 14

8 bit Midi and More

by J.D. Craig

Since the last issue, yours truly has been busy visiting and learning.

As regular readers of this column know, I have been interested in MIDI (the Musical Instrument Digital Interface) since its inception. I now own two MIDI keyboards, and will probably purchase some software and hardware to run them from my 8 bit Ataris. The infamous Joseph Lyons ACEs demo has long passed, but I knew that good ol' Dr. Bob Loux had purchased something that was working for him. So he graciously invited me (via HELP KEY II) to his studio to see MIDITRACK in action.

MIDITRACK II (\$94) is Hybrid Arts software that works with your 8 bit Atari, their MIDIMATE interface (\$99), and any MIDI keyboard (Dr. Bob has the Casio CZ101 - very nice at a good low price). The software can be thought of as turning your computer into a multitrack tape recorder. Simply play in a line of music on your synthesizer while in the record mode, and then play it back. Don't like what you hear? Editing is well supported - just get into the recorded sequence and clean up anything you don't like. MIDITRACK allows up to 16 tracks, and can simultaneously control more than one synth. It also "has a variety of internal and external sync options" that can use "the clock signal from any popular drum machine, MIDI clock, TTL direct clock, or a clock track on tape." Guess what's on my Christmas list! Correct, and so is the DX-Editor and MidiPatch DX.

For more info on their 8 or 16 bit Atari

MIDI products, write to Hybrid Arts at 11920 W. Olympic Blvd. L.A. CA 90064.

ST/synth owners might also want to check out the Transform Modular Music System. This software uses XSyn modules for different synths under a "Manager" program. So far, only a voice editing program with monophonic sequencer is available (\$99 per module), but they plan to release a larger sequencer (XTrack) and music score layout and laser printing programs (XNote and XScript). From the Beam Team, 6100 Adeline St. Oakland CA 94608.

The 83rd Convention of the Audio Engineering Society was held in the New York Hilton and Sheraton hotels on October 16 through 19. One sees a lot of computers in audio these days, and most evident were the IBMs (or clones), and Macs (Apple's incursion into education has been paying off in a big way. Students use and develop software in the schools, and bring it straight out into the business world.) But coming in a not too distant third were the 1040 STs. Commodores were also seen.

While in the city, we also visited Unique Recording - MIDI CITY. They were pretty busy at the time, but I did get in to see their programming room. For details on their setup, check the April '86 issue of STUDIO SOUND.

Recently, there was a message on one of the local BBSs inquiring as to a method of transferring files between an 8 bit and ST Ataris without using "modem" procedures. Might I suggest that Atari experimenters turn their attention to the MIDI interface? It is optically isolated (no voltage matching problems), well documented, and fairly standardized. It should not be too difficult to write transfer codes for any two computers that can use a MIDI bus.

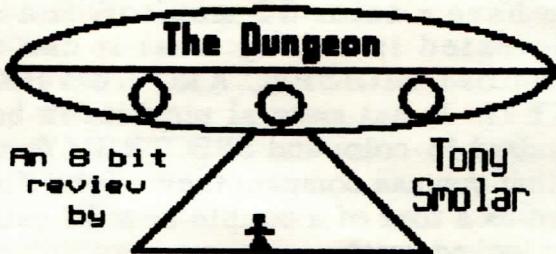
If it's such a great idea, why hasn't it been done already? Perhaps business and industry's heavy use of parallel co-processing influences software developers to avoid a serial bus - less profit potential. Or perhaps because Atari

is still not taken seriously in many quarters - the ST computers have MIDI onboard, but I know of none other that do. Or maybe because we are too content to let the other guy do it - and it just doesn't get done. We've done without it so far, why do we need it now?

At the Eastern Pa. Atari Expo, Hybrid Arts President Frank Foster discussed the MIDI bus. He felt that it was flexible and reliable. His company created the MIDI MAZE that attracted so much attention, linking all those computers in one interactive game. Hopefully, that was only the first - and not the last - non musical use of MIDI.

Finally, a lesson from more local BBS users: Why didn't a new 1050 drive not want to be called drive #3? Fellow Atarians gave me a couple suggestions and inspired me to go digging through MAPPING THE ATARI again. Yeah, that's it - memory location 1802 (DRVBYT) - that's the ticket. Wilkinson's default for the number and names of the DOS's drives was two. POKE 1802 with a decimal 135 (hexadecimal 87, binary 10000111) to use drives 1, 2, 3, and 8 (see how the bits work in the binary number?). Gee, I wonder if I should add the DOS MANUAL to that Christmas list, too?

Alternate Reality



If you're into role playing games, you may have been disappointed in the quality of some of these games on a computer when compared to a regular type such as D&D. Many of these games lose their novelty about halfway through after everything's been discovered or more often

they become easier along the way because the player's characters grow stronger but the opposition does not. But now there's Alternate Reality- The Dungeon, the long awaited follow up to the city. In this Dungeon there's always something new to find, and if anything, it becomes more challenging instead of easier.

When the program is booted you are treated to Graphics Demo which includes a song made with Phillip Price's Advanced Music Processor (There is a demo of this music program on Help Key II called AMPDEMO) The demo also includes a spectacular swirling starfield.

After it's loaded it's time to make the character or load a pre-made one and then it's off into the damp dark Dungeon.

One of the tasks to do in this game is to determine what the characters alignment (measurement of good or evil) is and play him or her accordingly. Alignment affects how the other dungeon inhabitants will react towards him and which guilds he or she can join.

As in all games of this type you are constantly searching for better armor and weapons. The dungeon features a wide variety of these including axes, swords, tridents, halberds, and crossbows as weapons (to name a few), and just about any kind of armor you could ever need.

Besides armor and weapons, this game also features many different types of other items like clothing, scrolls, compasses, clocks, keys, wands, trump cards, potions, and of course, GOLD. The latter can be used at the D&P shop (a sort of general store), the Inn, the Tavern, or any of the other shops you may find.

One definite improvement over the city is the inclusion of more shops and other establishments, these include the one's mentioned earlier plus a chapel, a potion brewery, oracles, fountains, bank vaults, and weapon smiths plus many more.

Wandering around the dungeon brings you into contact with other people or creatures, with whom you can either talk to or fight. Healers can heal your wounds,

paupers come up to you and beg for money, while thieves try to steal it, but watch out for the monsters like snakes, ghosts, and trolls. You never know who or what you'll meet next.

Joining a guild can bring extra benefits to a character, they can remove any curse's you have picked up, give you a locker to store your belongings, and they give you a ring which allows you to learn and use spells.

The Dungeon does well to use the special features of the Atari computer. The program automatically senses if you have 64K and uses that extra space for extra data storage, and it will even use the 128K on a 130xe resulting in much less disk access time. As mentioned before the program uses Advanced Music Processor which shows itself in the shops. It provides interesting sound effects with the music plus "follow the bouncing ball" type lyrics.

The graphics in this game are especially well done. The 3-D First Person graphics really does look like a dungeon and adds a certain atmosphere to the game. Most of the creatures you encounter are well drawn and some are even animated. The graphics of the insides of some of the shops may make you wonder if you are really playing this game on an 8-bit machine.

Of course, everything can't be perfect, or we wouldn't need delete keys. This game has a few problems. For instance, after you use the "transfer city character option" the character will be attacked by an F.B.I. agent which no character can beat or escape from. These agents were apparently put there to appear when the user boots a pirated disk, (mine's original) this is probably due to a bug which may have been fixed in later versions. Another problem is that the program removes your character from the disk at the beginning of the game and doesn't replace it until you save the game again so this means that if the power gets shut off or you die (which is almost inevitable) you lose the character which means all that time you invested in him is wasted unless you backup your

character disk with a sector copier before you play (a good idea).

After all is said and done, if you're looking for a good adventure or role playing game then this is one of the top choices for the Atari 8-bit computer line.

The President's Column

by Dennis John

Thanks to our latest contest, we've got quite a bit of material for HARDCOPY so I'll keep it short this time.

At the January 9th meeting, the winners were selected. Ben Martnick was top winner. He decided to take the Atari 20 meg hard drive as his prize. Our second prize winner, Glenn Snyder, took the Avatex 1200 modem and P.R. Connection. Charles Baily walked off with third prize, a fifty dollar GEMINI gift certificate.

We had several demos at the January meeting. My demo of DIGISPEC didn't really show the programs potential. Our projection television couldn't display the spectacular results this program can give. (over 24,000 colors at the same time!) If you have a color ST monitor, and are interested in seeing what it can do, download DIGISPEC.ARC from HELP KEY II. It has several pictures in both standard 16-color and SPECTRUM format so that you can compare them. John Slaby gave us a tour of a couple new ST games that looked great.

Several members have offered to do demos at upcoming meetings. Look for NEWSROOM, MICRO CHECK, FLIGHT SIMULATOR and BOUNTY BOB as well as a meeting devoted to the ARC utilities (8- and 16-bit versions) over the next few months. We still need more demos however so please, give some thought to

the possibility of doing a ten or fifteen minute run-through of a piece of software or hardware that you use. As always, we've got support available for you in the form of video tape, slides, photocopies, whatever you need.

We have firm meeting dates set with the community college for February 13th, March 12th, April 9th and May 14th. All meetings are set for 2PM (doors open at 1) in the cafeteria.

Treasurer's Report
July to December 1987
by John Slaby

Income Items

Curnt Note Subs	119.00
Disk Sales	568.00
Membership	995.00
Misc.	25.00
News. Ads.	120.00
Raffle.	252.00
Vendor Fee.	16.00
Total:	2095.00

Expense Items

Club's BBS	751.78
Contest	50.00
Curnt Note Subs	119.00
Hot Line	130.11
Library	239.94
Meet/Expen	52.88
Meet/Hall	150.00
Membership	614.83
Misc. Exp.	26.50
Newsletter Postage	386.72
Newsletter Printing	1260.24
President	20.46
Programs	16.00
Promotion	77.45
Rafle/Item	75.86
Total:	3971.77

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March 12th

April 9th

May 14th

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If you would like more information about ABE's ACEs, write us at the club's address or call the club HOTLINE at the number listed on this page.

This newsletter is published by ABE's ACEs on a bi-monthly basis (six issues per year). Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and not ABE's ACEs. All unsigned articles should be attributed to the Editor. This newsletter is provided free to our membership and on an exchange basis to other user groups. Original articles from our newsletter may be reprinted in other newsletters, provided credit be given to both author and source.

Submissions to the newsletter may be made via the club's BBS, via mail, or at the general meetings.

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CALL FORWARDING---- (215) 821-9222

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